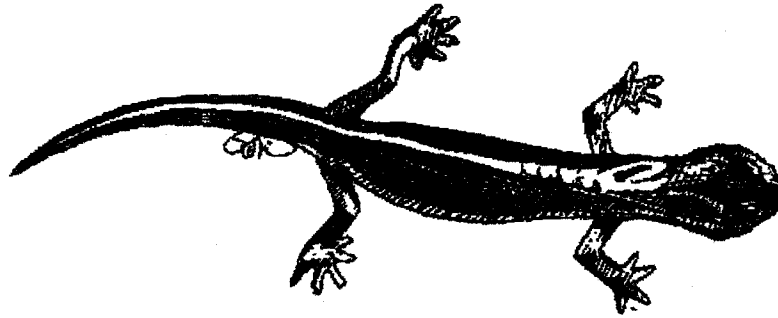


Limestone Salamander

Hydromantes brunus
Family Plethontidae



Global Rank: G1

State Rank: S1 (CA)

Distribution: Very limited distribution: vicinity of confluence of Bear Creek and Merced River in Mariposa County, California. Elevations range from 840 ft. (255 m.) to 2,500 ft. (760 m.).

Description: Adults reach to about 3 in. (7.5 cm.) in snout-vent length. Coloration is uniformly brown above and pale below. Under-side of the tail is yellowish. Eyes are large and limbs, toes, and tail is relatively long. Toe tips of adpressed limbs overlap by 1 1/2 costal folds. Young are pale yellowish green above, changing with age through pale yellow and beige to brown.

Reproduction: It is suspected that it breeds in limestone caverns from May to July, with a peak in June. The mean clutch size is 7 (range 5 to 14).

Food: Searches for insects and other inverte-



Current range of the limestone salamander

brates under surface objects and in caverns.

Habits: Requires moist outcrops and caverns in digger pine, oak, buckeye, and chaparral belt of the lower Merced Canyon, California. Limestone salamanders live in crevices of cliffs and ledges and in talus, especially where the rocks are overgrown with moss. Active during period of fall, winter, and early spring rains, except during cold spells. Often coils its body when disturbed. It is not believed to be territorial, and home ranges may be as large as one acre (0.4 ha.).

Management Implications: California status is rare. The Briceburg State Ecological Reserve is within the range and offers habitat protection.

Important References: Stebbins, R.C. 1985. A field guide to western reptiles and amphibians. The Peterson Field Guide Series, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, NY; Verner, J., and A.S. Boss. 1980. California wildlife and their habitats: western Sierra Nevada. USDA Pacific Southwest Forest and Range Experiment Station, GTR PSW-37, Berkeley, CA.